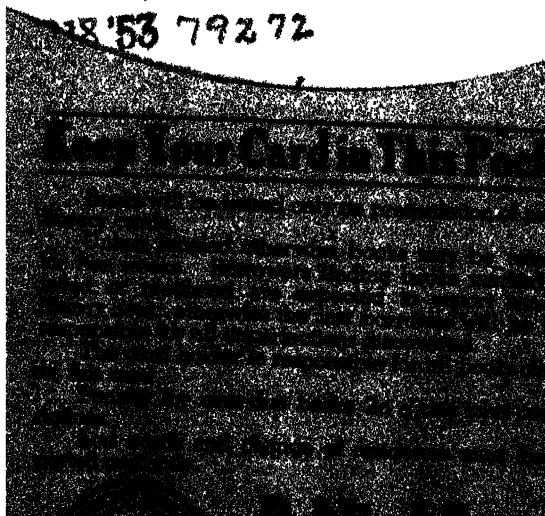


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*'THE MUSICAL PILGRIM'*

*The '48'*

Bach's Wohltemperirtes Clavier

BY

J. A. FULLER-MAITLAND

BOOK I

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## INTRODUCTION

AMONG the supreme achievements of the art of music there is none that has a more singular origin than *Das Wohltemperirte Clavier*, that great collection of preludes and fugues in all the keys, major and minor, which Bach disposed in two books, completed in 1722 and 1744 respectively. For by its name the collection professed to be merely an object-lesson or practical demonstration in support of a new system of tuning the domestic harpsichord or clavichord of the day. Some of the preludes had already been used as part of the instruction-book called *Clavierbuchlein* meant for the technical training of his sons, and we are not to suppose that Bach was conscious of any specially lofty ideal in writing the pieces. The high emotion, the deep pathos, the romantic vision, and even the learning which we now admire in them, probably got into them by a kind of divine accident; though we may well imagine that Bach would consciously give of his best to support that system of tuning which the world has now accepted for all keyed instruments.

The adjective 'well-tempered' refers to a controversy that was not finally settled for some years after the appearance of the '48' and its circulation among the admirers of the master in various manuscript copies. There is a curious problem in the nature of music, with which the Greeks were well acquainted, that if a series of fifths (from C to G, G to D, and so on) is tuned exactly true, we eventually arrive back at a note which ought to be in exact unison with the original C from which we started; but there is a gap in the series, a small interval known as a 'comma',



which must for ever forbid the completion of that circle of fifths. The human voice, and the bowed instruments which can modify their pitch as they please, can make music in tune in all keys; but the fixed pitch of the keyed instruments made this impossible as long as any of the keys was perfectly tuned. It had been the practice of the older makers and players of keyed instruments to tune a few keys perfectly and to let the error of the 'comma' be relegated to the keys which were seldom needed. Just Intonation and the Meantone system were upheld by many of the older musicians, who were ready to sacrifice the less obvious keys for the sake of the undoubtedly great beauty of the keys which were in tune. We do not know who in Bach's time was the champion of the system of Equal Temperament, which may be described as a way of spreading the error equally among all the keys; but the title of this work proves that he threw himself into the discussion on the side of the innovators. Any one who wished to play the whole book through must needs have his 'Clavier' tuned in the new way. The organ was for the most part left alone, or provided with an arrangement by which the black notes were divided so as to give a different pitch for A flat and G sharp, for example. But in the other keyed instruments there was nothing for it but to lose the exquisite purity of the chords in the keys with few sharps or flats, for the sake of widening the resources of the art by the use of all twelve keys.

The 'Clavier' of the title is a word of tiresome ambiguity, for it is applied equally to the virginal, spinet, harpsichord, clavichord, and pianoforte, and even to the manuals of the organ. But internal evidence is very strong that the great majority of

these preludes and fugues were intended for the clavichord. The harpsichord had no power whatever of making one part emphatic, or of laying stress upon one of the voices of a fugue while other voices were being played by the same hand.

Fugues that were written for the harpsichord are apt to give evidence of their purpose by such devices as getting the subordinate parts into one hand, and leaving the other hand free to bring out the prominent part on another manual. But the way in which the parts in the '48' are interwoven and divided between the two hands proves clearly that an instrument must have been used which could answer to different finger-pressures; and such an instrument is the clavichord, with its power of almost infinite gradation within its narrow limits of tone. The full beauty of many of these preludes and fugues can only be realized when they are played on the clavichord, or when a clavichord player, accustomed to the delicate gradations of his own instrument, transfers them to a peculiarly sensitive pianoforte.

The full title of the first book is as follows (a facsimile is given in Parry's *J. S. Bach*, p. 146, and in Tovey's edition):

Das wohltemperirte Clavier oder Praeludia und Fugen durch alle Tone und Semitonia, sowohl tertiam majorem oder Ut Re Mi anlangend, als auch tertiam minorem oder Re Mi Fa betreffend. Zum Nutzen und Gebrauch der Lehrbegierigen Musikalischen Jugend als auch deier in diesem Studio schon habil seyenden besondern Zeitvertreib aufgesetzt und verfertigt von Johann Sebastian Bach, p. t. hochfurstl. Anhalt-Cothenischen Capellmeistern und Directore derer Kammer-Musiquen. Anno 1722.

(The well-tuned Keyboard, or, Preludes and Fugues in all the tones and semitones, alike with the major third, or Ut, Re, Mi, and with the minor third, or Re, Mi, Fa. For the use of young musicians who are eager to learn, and also as a pastime for those who are already skilled in this study, set out and

made by Johann Sebastian Bach, Capellmeister to the Grand Duke of Anhalt-Cothen, and director of his chamber-music. Anno 1722.)

It is perhaps worth noticing that in this title, with its queer jumble of languages, there is no claim made for the book on the ground of its being a practical illustration of fugal composition. It was not an 'Art of Fugue', and there have been sticklers for the letter of the laws of fugue who have pronounced sentence against more than one of the '48' as transgressing the rules. All one can say is 'so much the worse for the rules'.

Many treatises on Fugue, and a famous line in *The Mikado*, have helped to spread the idea that fugues are necessarily dry and scholastic things; but if practical refutation were wanted, here it is, for in the '48', whether they are model fugues or not, we have creations of superlative beauty and expressiveness. At the same time, no one will enjoy the fugues less for knowing at least the outline of the plan on which they are constructed; for the fugue is of all the forms of music the most elaborate, and without any knowledge of what is meant by the technical terms we are obliged to use, the listener, even if he be one of nature's musicians, will receive little impression beyond a sense of cumulative effect or a general feeling of a joyful or melancholy mood, as the case may be. Therefore it may be excusable to refer shortly to the usual names for the different parts of the form, since they will have to be used even in the most cursory analysis.

It is merely a gibe that 'Fugue is a composition in which the parts fly from one another, and the hearer from them all'; but the idea of flight and pursuit is undoubtedly present in the typical fugue,

and an amusingly accurate analysis of the form is in Browning's 'Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha'.

*Subject.* The first phrase, almost always given out by itself, and very soon 'imitated' by the

*Answer.* This is the starting-point of the second 'voice' or part, and as a rule is a repetition of the Subject a fourth or fifth above or below it. Here we must face two terms which are not at all helpful, viz. *Real* and *Tonal*. For practical purposes, the octave is considered to be divided into two at the Dominant, or fifth above the key-note; but it is obvious that the two divisions are not equal, since a fifth is a larger interval than a fourth. The plan of a fugue requires that the subject should lead into the dominant key, and that the Answer should lead back to the tonic harmony, so that another voice may enter with the Subject again. In some cases the repetition of the Subject by the Answer can be exact; in such cases the Answer is called a 'Real' one, and the first of these fugues is an example. In other cases the intervals have to be adapted in the Answer in order to come back to the tonic harmony for the new entry of the Subject. A very clear instance is in the second of the '48', where between the third and fourth notes of the Answer there is the interval of a fifth, while the Subject in the same place had a fourth. (Book I has nine 'real' to fifteen 'tonal' fugues; and Book II an equal number of each.)

*Counter-Subject.* While the 'Answer' is entering, the part which first announced the Subject must do something else, and the notes with which it accompanies the newly-entering part are called the Counter-Subject. Many fugues have more than one counter-subject; but whether single or manifold, this feature is an integral part of the structure, and in some cases

Bach seems to be more interested in the counter-subject than in the subject itself.

*Exposition.* The entry of all the parts for which the fugue is laid out, alternately with the Subject and the Answer, together with the Counter-Subject in each in turn, completes what is called the 'Exposition' of the fugue; and often there follows almost immediately the 'Counter-exposition', a restatement of the entries, in a different order from the original.

*Episode.* This name is given to the short transitional passages which are often used to lead from one division of the fugue to another; they are freely invented, but in the greatest examples are closely connected in style with the rest of the material.

*Stretto.* One of the most interesting points in the typical fugue is when the Answer, which at first entered at a certain distance after the entry of the Subject, now enters again at a shorter distance. The various 'stretti' in the first fugue are easy to grasp, and very beautiful. It was the custom to arrange successive 'stretti' so that the distance between the entries was lessened every time; sometimes the climax of these entries was called a 'stretto maestrale'; a wonderful stretto of this kind occurs at the end of the fifth fugue of Book II.

*Inversion.* The Subject or Answer is sometimes brought in upside down, every rising interval of the original being imitated by a falling interval in the inversion.

*Augmentation.* The Subject is sometimes presented in notes of double the original length, and sometimes in

*Diminution,* or in notes of half the original length. The last three devices are generally introduced simultaneously with the repetition of the Subject or Answer in its original form.

*Pedal Point.* Somewhere near the end of the fugue there is very often a passage built on a held note in the bass part, either the key-note (tonic pedal) or the dominant ; upon this the other parts run their course, with all kinds of references to subject, counter-subject, and episodes. There are plenty of fine instances in the '48', but perhaps the most triumphant use of the device is the magnificent chorus 'But the righteous souls' in the *Requiem* of Brahms, the whole number being built on a tonic pedal.

So much for the dry bones of the structure ; the student who wishes to go on with the anatomy of Fugue may be recommended to read the treatises of Ebenezer Prout on 'Fugue' and 'Fugal Analysis', the 'Analysis of the Wohltemperirtes Clavier' by Riemann, or Dr. Iliffe's scholarly book on the same subject. The detailed commentary by Professor Donald Tovey in the edition published by the Associated Board of the R.A.M. and the R.C.M. is of very great value. Such study is to be heartily encouraged, provided only that the student's attention is not so taken up with the technical ingenuity of the work as to disregard its poetical beauty. It is well to play these masterpieces as pure music, without reference to their erudition on the one hand or to their technical value as manual exercises on the other. There is no doubt that no book of technical exercises has half the value of the '48' for increasing independence of finger, the power of bringing out one part above the rest, and for training brain and fingers simultaneously.

Whether we approach this great work from the point of view of pianoforte technique, of fugal analysis, or of musical beauty, it will prove to have revelations for us all. He who has ground at the various manual

difficulties which beset his path, and he who has studied the fugues as illustrations of obedience to or transgressions of the rules of the form, will suddenly become aware of the exquisite musical eloquence, the enormous range of emotion, and the depth of feeling which are the crown and glory of this, as of all Bach's work; and in like manner he who has loved them for their mere musical beauty and perhaps has lived with them as friends of every day, will find a new fascination in following closely the plans upon which they are constructed; to him the tiresome nomenclature will be only a very slight hindrance to his enjoyment of the process of analysis, and he need not fear that the minute investigation will disturb the beauty of the ideals. The microscope does not lessen the botanical student's love of the flowers he dissects.

Comparing these fugues with the others by the same master for keyboard (apart from those for organ), we are struck by the small number of isolated fugues that are worthy to be put beside the '48'. The great fugue of the 'Chromatic Fantasia', and the brilliant work in A minor with the arpeggio prelude, are almost the only two that can claim an equality with the '48'; and in making up the collection we can almost see Bach giving of his very best in support of the new system of tuning, and putting, as we say, his best foot foremost in order to get the new tuning accepted generally.

Although it had to wait more than half a century before it was printed, the collection must have made a sensation amongst the pupils of the master; for there are manuscript copies of the whole work in abundance, and these have very great authority, since there are only two undoubted autographs of the first part (both in Berlin), and neither of these is quite

complete. For many years the authorities for the complete second book were only the transcripts by Bach's pupils and contemporaries, for the most important autograph was in England, in the possession of Clementi, at whose sale it was bought by a Mr. Emmett; his daughter left it to Miss Eliza Wesley, who bequeathed it to the British Museum in 1896. Its importance in points of detailed readings cannot be exaggerated, but so far its influence on practical editions seems to have been very small.

The first published editions were by Nageli of Zurich in 1800, and by Simrock about the same time; in the latter the two books are in reverse order. The original Peters edition came only a year afterwards, and it must have been one of these three that came into the hands of Samuel Wesley, whose enthusiastic letters to his friend Jacob about the work may still be read with profit and amusement. Of more modern editions there is of course no end; one of the best-known is that of Czerny, valuable for its practical hints on fingering, &c., but containing numbers of false readings. Samuel Wesley and C. Horn brought out their edition in 1810-13; and this, with Czerny's, was the standard edition until Kroll edited it for the Bach-Gesellschaft. Bischoff prepared a carefully annotated edition as vols. 5 and 6 of his complete edition of Bach's clavier works. There have recently appeared two important English editions: one prepared by Professor Tovey and fingered by Harold Samuel (published by the Associated Board of the R.A.M. and the R.C.M.); and the other a beautifully printed and admirably arranged volume, published by Novello & Co., and carefully edited by Harold Brooke.



## BOOK I

### i. 1. *In C major (4-part fugue)*

THERE are shrines that can only be approached after the worshipper has performed some lustral rite, and the need for such purification meets us at the threshold of the great temple we are now to enter. For in order to understand the real meaning of the Preludes and Fugues, and to get from them the spiritual blessings they can convey, we must purify ourselves from all taint of remembrance of a certain dreadful piece of sentimentality which was for many years fashionable even among people who ought to have known better, Gounod's 'Meditation' or 'Ave Maria', a sugary tune placed on the top of the first Prelude. The whole point of the Prelude in C is its negation of a defined melody; it is in one aspect a transformation of the arpeggio prelude in common use, which generally means nothing whatever, into a creation of perfect loveliness, the ethereal beauty of which is due in great measure to the subtle suggestions of its harmonies. Like many other flawless works of art, it seems as though it had sprung forth spontaneously, as though it could not ever have gone through any process of development; but there remain for our instruction evidences of the process by which it attained its perfection. No doubt the dull version handed down by Forkel (see B.-G., xiv. 205) must represent its first state, and in the 'Clavierbuchlein' it is found more highly developed. The comparison of the versions is made by Bischoff, p. 8.

There is a very curious point between bars 22 and 23, where in a good many editions there is found a bar built on G as a bass in order to pass more smoothly from the F sharp of bar 22 to the A flat of bar 23. The whole evidence of the autographs is against the addition, which only occurs in a MS. by one Schwenke. The abrupt transition on which all the best MS. authorities agree is not unlike Bach, and most people in the present day will feel that they prefer the prelude without Schwenke's extra bar, which, as we might expect, is required for Gounod's *eau sucrée*.

The Fugue, with its quiet, almost stealthy, beginning, has not escaped the censures of the wiseacres; for it has no 'episode' properly so called, and no counter-exposition. It is richer in 'strettos' than almost any other of the '48', and very wonderful they are; in most of them (there are six in all) the one voice follows the other at a distance of two quavers, and once the imitation is after the fourth quaver. Here, too, we find traces of alterations by the master himself, for it seems that the theme had originally a quaver and two even semiquavers for the third group of the first bar, and in parallel places; the dotted quaver and the two demisemiquavers obviously make for greater point and effect.

### i. 2. *In C minor (3-part fugue)*

The second prelude, in C minor, has a striking point of similarity with the first; for each of the successive figures is repeated twice in each bar, giving a great stateliness to the march of the harmonies with their wonderful modulations. To some superficial critics it has seemed 'like an exercise', and in its earliest shape, in the 'Clavierbuchlein' of W. F.

Bach—which leaves out the exciting Presto and Adagio portion—there is some excuse, for it is a fine study in technique. But, as in many of Chopin's *Études*, the course of the harmony gives it great individuality, even without the additional bars that turned it into a really dramatic piece of music. Schwenke, Kroll, and Czerny give some curious variants here and there, but the text accepted (in bar 18) by Bischoff and Tovey is indisputably the best.

Nor is there any doubt about the text of the fugue, which shows Bach in a mood of freakish gaiety, as though he were anxious to controvert the silly idea that the minor mode must always be melancholy in character. From the ninth bar onwards, the rhythmic opening of the theme is continually prominent, often accompanying the regular entries of subject or answer, so that for a second or two we are not certain in which part the real entry is being made.

### i. 3. *In C sharp major (3-part fugue)*

The C sharp major prelude and fugue can hardly fail to convey a kind of pastoral impression, like the happy peace of summer fields, intensified, not broken, by the thousand little sounds that tell of tiny activities everywhere. The two might stand as a commentary on Blake's 'Shepherd', and the fugue for an illustration of the line 'His tongue shall be filled with praise'. Though the lovely prelude seems to be entirely spontaneous, yet it, like its predecessors, has undergone alterations, for in bars 8 and 16, the group which now consists of a quaver followed by four semi-quavers was originally one of three even quavers. Forkel hands down a version in which, after bar 63,


the prelude has only six more measures. There is a very curious point in musical psychology in connexion with this prelude ; for in one edition it is given in the key of D flat, which of course is far easier to read than that of C sharp major. To the hearer without the music before him, there could be no conceivable difference between the two versions, since the notes would be exactly the same in both ; but a great many players will share the common feeling that the key with seven sharps has a very brilliant, glittering effect, while the five flats suggest a mood of languor and romantic sentiment ; in the minds of such players the two are as strongly contrasted as sunlight and moonlight ; and perhaps some of the difference they feel may be actually though unconsciously conveyed to the listener.

The variants in the fugue are mainly concerned with the third group of semiquavers in bar 3, where in most of the manuscripts there is an F double-sharp, though several of the authorities read it as F sharp. It is impossible to be quite sure which Bach meant, but the editions of Bischoff, Tovey, and Brooke agree in preferring the double-sharp. The subject itself is not transformed in any way, but the two counter-subjects are combined, inverted, and otherwise modified.

#### i. 4. *In C sharp minor (5-part fugue)*

With this Prelude and Fugue Riemann says, 'We now enter into the Holy of Holies ; throughout the sum-total of musical literature there are but few pieces so full of dignity and of inspiration as these two.' In the Prelude we meet for the first time with

a more highly organized melodic structure than that of the preceding preludes, each of which is built on a recurring figure. Here there are two very beautiful themes, each the complement of the other; the first is closely imitated, as if the whole prelude were to be in canonic form, but at the fifth bar a rising theme enters, and the two proceed side by side, worked with a skill so amazing that our sense of its ingenuity is lost in awe at its divine pathos. The signs for various ornaments, given by Kroll and other editors (by Bischoff and Tovey in brackets), seem to have been added to the original autograph, not impossibly by Bach himself, and quite probably due to his own or some pupil's desire to transfer the piece from the clavichord to the harpsichord. They emphasize the romantic softness of the prelude, and are so characteristic that the unadorned version given by Mr. Brooke will appeal to the few rather than to the many. This editor, curiously, retains only one of the many arpeggio signs of other editions, that in bar 3, which hardly seems to justify its presence if the others are left out. In particular, there is one in the second half of bar 29,

where the chord  with a transverse stroke

through it indicates that the intermediate note, C sharp, must be lightly touched as the written notes are held down. Like the other ornaments, it is fully written out in Tovey's edition, but, unlike them, is not enclosed in brackets.

The five-part fugue is of matchless grandeur, and in spite of the extreme elaboration of its design, is one of those that most readily make an impression upon the less advanced student. The theorists call it a fugue with three counter-subjects, rather than a triple fugue; but the name does not matter very

much as long as we understand the outline of its structure. The majestic theme of four notes is associated with an unobtrusive counter-subject through the exposition and the counter-exposition, that is until bar 36, when the flowing quavers of the second counter-subject attract our attention; this has its regular entries, and is joined with the main theme in most effective contrast. The first counter-subject, having played its part, is not heard again through the fugue; at bar 49 yet another counter-subject of great importance comes in again with successive entries, and from this point the three (the theme and the second and third counter-subjects) are worked together and woven in and out with gorgeous intricacy. Even this is not enough, for at bar 92 the third counter-subject starts a stretto of its own, and the main theme accompanies it with a stretto equally independent. At this point the flowing second subject withdraws in its turn, and the rhythm of the first counter-subject is allowed to appear at the very end, on the double pedal of the last four bars, where the main theme and the third counter-subject are for a moment associated with it between the stationary parts of the soprano and bass. Of course, it is a hopeless task to give any description in words which will even suggest the beauty of such a fugue as this; it is perhaps more useful to give some hints as to the best way of interpreting its spirit. The study of the work on the clavichord tells one more about it than volumes of analysis; for the three most important factors can be successfully differentiated on that instrument by the use of various touches. The theme itself must be as heavy as the limitations of the clavichord will allow; the flowing quavers of the second counter-subject can be done with a light but *legatissimo* touch, and the emphatic little taps

of the third can be brought out with a delicate staccato followed by well-slurred quavers. To keep these three distinct is not impossible even on the piano, and such a phrasing as I have suggested is evidently recommended in the Brooke edition.

### i. 5. *In D major (4-part fugue)*

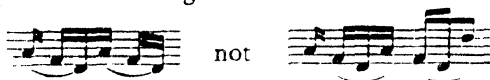
The D major Prelude is another of those that are built on a recurring figure, which figure serves an educational purpose; as in other similar cases, the books, such as Friedemann's 'Clavierbuchlein' and Forkel's transcript, which seem to have served for instruction, shorten the end of the prelude, cutting out the cadenza-like passage which affords so admirable a relief from the recurrent motion of the figure. As a study in *leggiere* playing, and especially in the pretty kind of mezzo-staccato that results from there being a space between the regular part of the figure and the notes above and below—in this case the first of each group of four semiquavers—it is particularly valuable, and Czerny must have taken hints from this prelude for some of his studies. But the prelude is much more than this, for after running a gracious course for 26 bars, there appears a pedal A, and the character becomes more dramatic. Perhaps the groups of eight demisemiquavers are intentionally introduced as a foretaste of the strange rhythm of the Fugue.

The group of eight rapid notes with which the fugue begins is to be understood as a highly ornamented version of a single D, on the unaccented second beat of the bar. The little group of four semiquavers at the end of bar 3 is responsible for the episodic matter of the fugue and is generally asso-

ciated with the dotted rhythm that appears in the subject. The little strettos are not very noticeable, and the whole fugue suggests an amusingly pompous overture in the French manner.

i. 6. *In D minor (3-part fugue)*

Here is yet another of the preludes on a recurrent figure, and as usual the version in the manuscripts used for instruction is shorter than the accepted version in the '48'. The emotional value of the prelude is very great (Bischoff goes so far as to mark it 'appassionato'), if proper attention is given to the true phrasing of the triplet figure. It is well indicated in the Novello edition (Brooke); but it is desirable to bear in mind throughout, or at all events until the last three bars, that the three semiquavers of each group are to be thought of thus :



The fugue subject is one of those which yields itself easily to various devices, and the phrasing of the Bischoff edition, which follows the autographs, brings out its character. Of special importance is the staccato mark on the second crotchet of bar 2, and at parallel places throughout. At bar 12 the alto part has a characteristic little anticipation of the inverted form of the subject which is regularly brought in at bar 14, and at bar 27 there is a stretto beginning with the inversion in the top part, followed by the direct theme in the middle and the inverted in the bass. The ending, for which the three fugal parts are increased to six, has the direct and inverted subject against one another, both moving in thirds.



i. 7. *In E flat major (3-part fugue)*

The wonderful composition which is styled 'Prelude' is really a very elaborate fugue on two subjects, a work of far greater musical import than the fugue which follows it under that title. Each of the two subjects has in the introductory bars its own free exposition, and the first, a theme of flowing semi-quavers, culminates in a passage of rushing demi-semiquavers, leading to the very beautiful delivery of the second theme. This, in like manner, is treated in the manner of a fugue, and at bar 25 the two subjects are combined; at bar 26 the regular answer to the first subject is anticipated by one of those false starts in which we can almost hear Bach laughing at us for being taken in. Three strettos appear before long; the first and second at a distance of two crotchets, and the third at a distance of four. After that point, from bar 48 onwards, the two subjects are combined and treated in new ways, and both appear at the very end in a most beautiful way.

After this profoundly impressive piece, the Fugue proper must come rather as an anticlimax, for it is in a far lighter mood and is less interesting to the student. The two groups of semiquavers in the second bar of the theme (immediately after the shake) provide the material for some interesting episodic work beginning in bar 7, where the figure is augmented in one part against its original form in another. The importance of the quaver rest in bar 1 is very great, and if it is ignored by the player, the fugue will lack the gaiety which is its chief characteristic.

i. 8. *In E flat minor, or  
D sharp minor (3-part fugue)*

The depths of human sorrow have surely never been more faithfully reproduced than they are in this sublime prelude, where two voices answer one another in poignant utterance; its style and feeling make one think of the Passion Music settings, in either of which it might find an appropriate place. I am reluctant to hunt for pictorial suggestion in Bach's music, but the treatment in early sculpture and painting of the two mourners at the foot of the Cross gives, to my mind, the clue to the proper interpretation of this prelude; for the grief it utters is no ordinary grief but a mystical passion, fulfilling the words 'a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed'.

The utmost care must be taken in bringing this prelude to actual performance, so that the chords, usually in arpeggio, should be kept subordinate to the 'voice' parts. I take it that the melody begins, not on the first note of bar 1, but with the quaver later in the bar, and that the B at the beginning is only the top note of the accompanying chord. In bar 4, again, I think that the leap of a tenth to the G flat is possibly not part of the melody, but that the G flat represents one of the accompaniment chords, though it is a single note. This suggestion is borne out by the fact that in Forkel's version this note is represented by a whole chord, identical with those that succeed it. In the same bar, and again in bar 6, the descent of the lower 'voice' may be regarded as merging itself into the accompaniment, since the first notes of bars 5 and 7 in the left hand are given by Forkel as chords.

Forkel's version has not much authority, but it often seems to represent some thought in Bach's mind which was afterwards altered for the better. I am not recommending that a chord should be substituted for the single note in these two passages, but rather that the player should think of the vocal phrase as joining on with the accompaniment. Why the editor of the Novello edition should wait until the twelfth bar before putting in his strange Italian direction, '*il [sic] melodia sempre ben sostenuto*', it is difficult to guess.

It is very difficult to put into words any impression of the magnificent fugue in E flat minor which shall convey an idea to the reader of the union which it displays of deeply expressive musical utterance with an amount of intricacy and technical resource in which it has few if any rivals among the '48'. It is easy, of course, to dwell on the dry bones of the structure; but in the act of enumerating the strettos or the use of augmentation and the like, the horrible vocabulary of the form must needs obscure for some little time the spiritual beauty and majesty of the work as a whole. The fugue appears in the autographs in D sharp minor, and many of the editions keep it in that key; Riemann is followed by the Novello edition in translating it into E flat minor, and it is probably easier for most people to read in six flats than in six sharps. I should recommend the student to keep both versions before him, using one for the detailed analysis which he will be well-advised to undertake, and the other for delight. If the anatomy of the fugue must be pointed out, I would draw attention to the many strettos, beginning at bar 19, and again at bar 24 and 27; at bar 30 the theme enters in inversion, and an even course is

pursued until bar 44, when there is a regular stretto of the inverted theme, soon (bar 47) followed by a less strict stretto, still of the inverted theme, between the alto and soprano parts, the latter giving a foretaste of what is to come by a kind of free augmentation; at bar 57 there is a very close stretto of the direct theme, and at bar 54 another stricter treatment of the direct theme, after which things quiet down for a little, but only to give us some relief before the marvels that are yet to be shown. At bar 62 we have the theme in augmentation (minims for crotchets, &c.) in the bass, above which the other parts have the theme in direct and inverted motion. The successive delivery of the augmented theme by the alto and soprano, with the interwoven strettos of the other voices, carry us to within a few bars of the close.

To some minds, the contemplation of such triumphant use of technical intricacy is in itself a delight, and for these no labour of analysis can be irksome; others there are who may be able to grasp only very few of its complications but who can dimly discern its greatness as a musical conception; it is only the superficial listener who will set the poetical and the technical factors in opposition, or who will fail to see how indissoluble is the tie that binds them together.

### i. 9. *In E major (3-part fugue)*

The lovely prelude is unmistakably pastoral in style, and the frequent occurrences of a stationary bass suggest some delicious musette played by a Watteau shepherd. The mood of gaiety which this arouses is carried on in the fugue, one of the simplest of the whole set, as well it might be after the profundity of its predecessor. Care must be taken to give full value

to the semiquaver rest in the subject, without letting it be felt that the emphatic first two notes are unconnected with the flowing passage that follows them. In one of the manuscripts of the French Suites, this prelude is used for the sixth of the set.

i. 10. *In E minor (2-part fugue)*

The Prelude in E minor is another of those that betray an educational origin, and we are not surprised to find that, like the others of the same kind, it exists in the versions of Friedemann, Bach, and Forkel in a shorter form, the second part, marked Presto, being omitted. But for those who need not regard it as a technical exercise, it is of very special value, since it embodies the ideal of rubato playing as conceived by Chopin, when he directed the left-hand part to be played in strict time, with the right-hand part freely wandering above it. The rhythmic pairs of quavers between the melody and the figures of the left-hand part are also of great value, and the more accurately these are kept going, the fiercer may be the phrasing of the beautiful sustained tune which, on the violin, would be given with great liberty as to time. When the Presto comes, rubato must be forgotten, as if the mechanical figuration had won the day; but it is at this point that the main excitement of the prelude begins.

The fugue has several unusual features: first of all, it is only in two parts; second, it is, as Prout says, 'the only example in all Bach's works of a real answer to a subject that closes in the key of the dominant'; and third, it contains two passages where the two parts are in unison for a whole bar. The chief interest of the fugue is in its episodes.

i. 11. *In F major (3-part fugue)*

Here is another pair of pieces that sound exquisitely simple, though it would be a very exceptional student of the art of fugue who could produce so fair a specimen as the Fugue in F major. The lyric grace of the prelude is echoed in the fugue, which contains few of the special devices, except some interesting strettos in bars 25 and 36; at bar 35 there is a delightful little false entry of the theme which leads to a pedal note held for five bars; there is another at bar 43, leading to a minor cadence.

i. 12. *In F minor (4-part fugue)*


The Prelude in F minor, which exhales a tender melancholy, may have been used as a study for cantabile playing, since a shorter version exists, though it is only Forkel who hands it down. The steady march of the crotchets with the wreath of semiquavers adorning each gives the piece a very distinctive beauty.

The serious opening notes of the fugue must be borne in mind throughout, for they are very apt to escape attention owing to the prominence given to the counter-subject, which provides the material for the episodes. It is curious that the orthodox 'tonal' alteration in the answer which is so strongly marked at the beginning, is not repeated at any of the later entries.

i. 13. *In F sharp major (3-part fugue)*

The prelude and fugue in F sharp are closely connected with one another in style, if not in actual thematic formation, though even here some might be tempted to see a family likeness between the

semiquaver triplets of the former and an important semiquaver figure in the latter. Both pieces have exquisite grace and give the idea of amiability more distinctly than almost any other of the '48'. In the prelude one of the autographs, as usual, introduces a number of typical harpsichord 'graces' which are out of place on the clavichord; and since the latter instrument is the direct ancestor of the pianoforte, modern interpreters are amply justified in adopting the unornamented version. Still, if bars 7, 12, 13, and 19 contain shakes on the dotted crotchet (as in Novello's edition), one does not see why the shake is left out in bar 1. It has been added in brackets by Professor Tovey. The ties from the end of one triplet to the first of the next are a characteristic feature, and add greatly to the suavity of the prelude.

The lovely subject of the fugue and its orthodox counter-subject are delightful enough; but at bar 7 there enters, by way of episode, an enchanting little figure (the lightness of which must be brought out either by a staccato touch, or by some other device of phrasing) that may almost be said to monopolize attention up to the end of the fugue. In bar 20 the shape of this charming figure is altered in the Novello edition for no apparent reason. The last group in the right hand should be  as it stands in Bischoff, Tovey, and the B.-G. editions.

#### i. 14. *In F sharp minor (4-part fugue)*

The plaintive falling figure of the prelude prepares us well for the grave beauty of the fugue; the separate quavers, which require a kind of semi-staccato touch,

and must be well emphasized, have been compared to dropping tears, but we need not press this, more important is it to notice that in bar 15 and following the figure is reversed and goes up instead of down, as if giving a hope of ultimate happiness.

The subject of the fugue enters in a curiously stealthy way, with a rhythm that is not easy to catch with the ear alone. There may very well have been some idea of mourning in Bach's mind when he wrote it, for the counter-subject, though but slightly related to the falling quavers of the prelude, is a figure that was used to represent tears in Bach's early 'Capriccio on the departure of a brother', where, of course, it is used with humorous intention. Apart from the inversion of the subject in the alto part of bar 20 and the bass part of bar 32, there are no structural points calling for special notice.

### i. 15. *In G major (3-part fugue)*

This gay prelude has undergone the process of expansion that we have noticed in comparing Forkel's version of several of the preludes; this time only three bars are added near the end; as usual, the shorter version is the earlier of the two. Professor Tovey's suggestions about the kinds of touch to be employed here are of great value.

The fugue has a subject that seems to be a glorification of the ordinary turn, and indeed it might easily be translated into the language of the dance, with two pirouettes followed by leaps in each part; the style is so ornamental that very often only two parts are required to make it effective. Inversion takes place at bar 20, both of subject and counter-subject, and there is an interesting stretto at bars 51 and 52.



i. 16. *In G minor (4-part fugue)*

The prelude, with its poignant use of a high shake (was it not Mendelssohn who pointed out the eloquence of this device in expressing grief?) and its florid passages, has a lyrical beauty that is rare even with Bach, and that can hardly have occurred before his time. The group at the end of bar 8, left hand, has more meaning if it is taken as in Professor Tovey's edition, with its rhythm corresponding to the succeeding figures, than as read by Mr. Brooke, following Bischoff. There is documentary evidence for both readings.

A piece so full of emotion as the fugue seems a little desecrated if we analyse it too minutely; yet it is only when we realize the impossibility of separating the two elements in Bach's music that we can hope to appreciate it properly. This fugue has some curious peculiarities in its first three bars; that the subject falls into two halves is evident to every one, and the second half, inverted, is used as the counter-subject, and is followed by the first half inverted. The fugue abounds in what may be called false entries, allusions to the theme which break off, and strettos over which the dryasdusts must shake their heads. There are few things in music, however, that stir the heart as this piece does, and the whole of life seems to be summed up when the subject appears again two bars before the end. It is one of the pieces to which the Bach-lover would be sure to fly in an hour of pain or bereavement, and from which he would be as sure to receive consolation and strength.

i. 17. *In A flat major* (4-part fugue)

Feminine grace and masculine vigour are both found in the beautiful prelude, not in contrast but in combination with each other, for each quality modifies the other without lessening its individuality. It is among the things most easy of comprehension in the whole book; yet there is evidence that it was not the spontaneous invention of a perfect moment, but the fruit of careful consideration. In one of the early editions (Hoffmeister's, which is held to represent Forkel's readings), bars 22-31 are slightly different from the accepted version, for the long and regular descending passage, first in the left hand and then in the right, is replaced by a far more conventional figure, apparently based on that which appears in bars 13-16. Take away the descending passage we know, and much of the character of the prelude would be lost; it is fairly certain, from external as well as internal evidence, that Hoffmeister represents an early 'state' of the music, just as Forkel so often gives a shortened form of several other preludes.

The fugue, for all its sensitive serenity and lyrical beauty, has a good many features which the dryasdusts would perhaps not approve, and which show us Bach in the act of trying various modifications of the fugal limitations. First, the counter-subject is not literally repeated every time when it should be; it preserves the regular semiquaver movement, but appears in many changed aspects; between bars 13 and 20 there comes a new 'exposition' of themes which leads from F minor to B flat minor; the way back is traced by fragments of the subject so presented that the hearer thinks a stretto must have begun. At bar 27 a complete exposition starts, in which the

'tonal' alteration of the theme is of great importance. The last three notes of the subject are dwelt upon in the answer, and soon generate a figure that plays a considerable part throughout the fugue. It might easily be mistaken for a regular inversion of the subject; for it gives the kind of satisfaction to the intelligent listener that he would derive from a regular inversion, something quite distinct from any pleasure he might take in the solution of a difficult problem, and touching very nearly the psychological source of musical enjoyment. The player who can bring out the subject in bar 10, while leaving the other parts clear though unemphatic, is far on his way to become a perfect Bach interpreter.

i. 18. *In G sharp minor, or  
A flat minor (4-part fugue)*

At first sight the 'motive' of this prelude seems like two repetitions of three rising semiquavers; but the sixth note is raised by one degree, and this change gives the whole character to the theme, the treatment of which may be commended to those who are apt to think that Beethoven invented the art of musical 'development'.

Another lesson in the same art can be found in the treatment of the subject of the fugue, for its last six notes provide the material for a number of characteristic episodes, and the two detached chords which often accompany this figure give to the fugue remarkable rhythmic point and interest. The counter-subject, copied from the opening notes of the subject, slightly altered, is combined with the rest of the material in a wonderful way; in bar 32, there is a difference of reading in the chief manuscripts about which much

ink has been spilt. The last quaver but one in the tenor part appears as B natural in the Novello edition, and as B sharp in Bischoff, Tovey, and the B.-G. editions. There is no doubt that the natural is the more likely reading, as the theme is thus presented in its original form; but for that very likeliness it is to be suspected by all who are accustomed to textual criticism, for how did the sharp find its way into the manuscripts if it was not meant to be there? The sixth quaver in the bass of this bar is another point of difference, as Bischoff and Brooke have F sharp, while Tovey upholds the E given in one of the manuscripts.

### i. 19. *In A major (3-part fugue)*

For the masterly use and economy of its material, the Prelude in A stands almost alone. To trace the course of its three motives, the slow bass crotchets beginning chromatically, the semiquaver phrase of the soprano part, and the syncopated figure in the middle, is a fascinating work, but only to be undertaken by those who fully realize the beauty that Bach could bring out from the ingenious combinations in which he delighted. Professor Tovey calls it a little triple fugue, and gives valuable advice on its interpretation.

The first isolated note of the fugue is the key-note of the work in every sense; if it is not emphasized at each entry, the shape of the subject will not be discerned. The entry of the answer before the end of the subject turns the very opening into a stretto, and at the sixth bar Bach plays a practical joke on us, by persuading us that the fugue is in four parts. There is no doubt that it is in three, but the way the entry

of the answer is managed in bar 6 is exactly the way in which a fourth voice would enter. This and other similar passages use the last note of some phrase as also the first (isolated) note of the subject or answer, and there is no real counter-subject until bar 23, when the semiquavers come in to carry on the interest of the fugue and lead it in a new direction. At bar 25 there is a kind of stretto, and again at bar 42 we seem aware that we are in the middle of a stretto, but as if we were unable to disentangle the threads of the beautiful fabric.

### i. 20. *In A minor (4-part fugue)*

As an introduction to its fugue, the prelude in A minor establishes its right to consideration; but in itself it is not one of the most interesting pieces in the book, though at bars 17-19 there appears a melodic fragment of real beauty.

The very long and elaborate fugue loses no time in beginning the series of 'devices', for after the exposition there is, instead of the usual 'counter-exposition', a new exposition in inverted form. On its conclusion, at bar 28, there is a series of strettos, all at the distance of two crotchets, until at bar 45 the latter half of the subject is treated in stretto in all four voices. The strettos, which in all (direct and inverted) amount to fourteen, culminate at a pause with a six-part chord; three bars after this, on a tonic pedal, the *stretto maestrale* begins—three parts in direct and one in inverted form—and for a conclusion, the first five notes of the theme are played together in inverted and direct form each in two parts in thirds, below and above a tonic pedal. The fugue was intended for a pedal harpsichord, and the last five bars

require a long-held A which is impossible to reproduce on the pianoforte, for both hands are fully occupied with the upper part, unless some plan like those suggested by Bischoff and Tovey be adopted, and the pedal note be re-sounded, with the help of the sustaining pedal of the modern instrument. This fugue, with all its wealth of intricate treatment, is by no means a mere exhibition of astounding skill; but a most impressive and majestic piece of music, in which it is possible to take delight, even if one does not trouble to count up all the strettos and inversions.

i. 21. *In B flat major (3-part fugue)*

The prelude and fugue in B flat express pure happiness, and if the little melody suggested in the top notes of the figure in the prelude tantalizes us by disappearing after two bars, we must be thankful that so it has been delivered from the fate of the first prelude and from the unholy hands of the 'meditator'. In some copies and editions the full chords are marked 'adagio' and the following demisemiquaver passages 'presto', but if they are taken in strict time there will be plenty of contrast between the two. In some editions, too, there is a single bass note, or an octave B flat added at the very end; but there is no good authority for this, and after the fairy-like figure has soared away the added note seems to bring us to earth again with a bump. Professor Tovey calls it 'perhaps the most Philistine single printed chord in the whole history of music'.

The fugue has a subject of four bars long, and its material is apt to reappear in various forms; the counter-subject, too, is very important, and has three

distinct phrases which are combined in many ways. First, at bar 6, the right hand has a phrase which the ear accepts as an inversion of the subject, though it is not actually one; in the next bar there are some repeated notes, followed by little groups of three semiquavers leading to a quaver. All these elements are made to generate the episodes. There is a real inversion of the theme at bar 19 in the bass; but it is only used as an episode, and at bar 35 there is a kind of stretto at the distance of two bars instead of four. Note the ingenious fingering of the last four bars by Mr. Samuel in the Tovey edition.

i. 22. *In B flat minor (5-part fugue)*

Like the eighth prelude, the twenty-second seems to have come out of some Passion Music; but the former is a picture of sublime suffering, and the latter a prayer that will not be denied. Sometimes we feel as if the last remaining veil would be torn down, and we should know exactly what was the thought in the mind of the suppliant; no words could match the fervour of pleading, and the abandonment of devotion, that are expressed in the climax, just before the close, where voice after voice crowds in to urge some human need.

The five-part fugue is a worthy companion to this eloquent prelude, and even in Bach's work it holds a very special place of honour. It is one of the cases in which every effort we make to grasp the structure adds greatly to our enjoyment, and a good many of the marvels it contains are at once evident to those who look at it simply as a beautiful piece of music, while the further we explore it the warmer will

become our love. The subject, with its descent of a fourth, and (after a rest) its leap to the ninth above, is arresting to the ear at once, and the 'tonal' answer is as satisfying to the ear as it is to the scientist. The descending crotchets after the 'leap' are constantly appearing in the episodes and elsewhere, together with the little pair of quavers in the counter-subject, and in such a way that often we are under the impression that we must have missed one of the entries, so authoritatively do they come in. At the same time there are places where the opening notes seem to be half covered up in chords, and might be supposed to be false entries; for even here Bach could not quite exclude his humour or resist the temptation to confound the purists of his time. The counter-exposition, beginning at bar 25, has the five entries, though the last is delayed. The stretto, which begins at bar 50, prepares player and listener for the wonders of the final stretto; for the second note of the subject is the first note of the answer, so that the natural phrasing of the opening, in which the second minim would be slightly less emphatic than the first, can no longer be given, since the same note must do duty for the end of one pair and the beginning of the next. All we can do is to emphasize each minim as it comes. At bar 55 two parts enter together, with the crotchets in thirds, and these produce a most interesting episode that leads to the wonderful *stretto maestrale* beginning at bar 67, where each part enters at the distance of a minim, and as before, each minim, except the first and last, must do double duty. It is only by careful marking of the natural phrasing of the original theme that the meaning of the subject can be brought out at this point, for otherwise there is a danger of supposing the theme to begin with a single note, instead of



the two minims. The actual ending is hardly less magical in effect, for the minims of the subject and the descending crotchets are worked together with the effect of yet another stretto.

### i. 23. *In B major (4-part fugue)*

The delicate prelude in B is a perfect illustration of Bach's skill in turning what seems commonplace material into something of exquisite quality; the little turn of semiquavers, and the rising crotchets of the middle part, together with a figure of quavers starting at bar 9, provide all the thematic suggestion; the first figure is prettily inverted five bars before the end.

The graceful subject of the fugue ends with a shake (not present in all the authorities); in such cases it is the rule that any ornament in the subject should be repeated in the parallel places afterwards, and it is possible to play the shake at nearly all the places where the subject and answer occur, and no objection could be made if the shakes were given (Novello's edition omits all but the first). The answer is tonally modified in an unusual way. At bar 16, where the alto part has the subject again, the bass gives a kind of fore-warning that the theme is going to be inverted, and this inversion duly comes in two bars afterwards, with the answer (also inverted) in attendance. At bar 21 the bass anticipates the place of its entry, thus making a stretto with the inverted alto part, though itself is in direct motion. The weaving of the counter-subject is very beautiful.

i. 24. *In B minor* (4-part fugue)

The prelude in B minor has a rather more formal cut than most of the preludes, for its two sections (like many in book ii) are repeated, as if it were a movement from a suite. The regular quavers of the bass go on with hardly an interruption, and the two parts in the right hand are treated in imitation, though there is no strict or even actual canon. The direction 'Andante' is in the autograph.

The 'Largo' of the fugue is also Bach's, as well as the marks of phrasing over the pairs of quavers in the subject. The third beat of bar 4 has a curious variant, for in one of the most authoritative manuscripts it stands thus (a) :



while in another this reading appears to have been substituted (not impossibly by Bach) for the text (b) as it stands in Novello's and many good editions, although Bischoff, Riemann, Tovey, and the B.-G. edition prefer the reading quoted at (a). This no doubt conforms closely to the rule that the dominant in the subject must be 'answered' by the tonic; but the progression in the earlier text is so much more pleasing, and sounds so much more natural (apart from the fact that later on in the fugue this form is uniformly used), that there is every excuse for adopting it even if it were not supported. See Tovey on the whole question.

The 'counter-subject falls naturally into three divisions: a semiquaver figure, a series of five descending crotchets, and another semiquaver figure, which last, imitated immediately it comes in, plays a very important part throughout the fugue. At bar 19 Bach plays with us again with a 'false entry', as the tenor part has the first three notes of the theme and then breaks off, making its real entry two bars later. It plays the same trick at bar 28, not making its real entry till bar 30. Can we doubt that this was done with humorous intention, notwithstanding the seriousness of the fugue? Bits of the counter-subject are tossed about and inverted. At bars 34-35, and again at bars 43-44, there are imitations which lead us to expect regular strettos, but the part which has started them soon leaves off and turns its attention to something else. In two places (bars 36 and 63) Professor Tovey supplies in the margin the form which Bach would undoubtedly have given to the soprano part had his clavichord possessed any notes above C.

The implied uncertainty in Bach's mind as to the correction of the more agreeable progression in deference to the rules, and the numerous departures from the stereotyped rules, lead us to believe that in the closing fugue of the first instalment of his great work, he was bent on showing that the forms are after all only the means to the end, that end being the creation of noble music. 'Fugues', he seems to say, 'were made for music, not music for fugues.' And of the nobility of this music there can be no doubt:





*'THE MUSICAL PILGRIM'*

*The '48'*

Bach's Wohltemperirtes Clavier

BY

J. A. FULLER-MAITLAND

BOOK II

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## BOOK II

WHAT is commonly called the second part of the *Wohltemperirtes Clavier* did not receive that title from Bach himself, who merely named it 'Twenty-four Preludes and Fugues'. But it is beyond doubt that in adopting the same elaborate plan of key-succession as had been used in the earlier collection, he meant the second set of pieces to be a counterpart to the first. By 1744, when the collection was completed, the dispute as to the Temperament question had ceased to be violent. The system of Equal Temperament had been generally adopted; for Gottlieb Muffat in his *Componimenti Musicali* (circa 1737) uses the key of B flat minor, which would hardly have been tolerable in the old days.

A certain number of the second set of preludes and fugues were actually composed in Bach's earlier life, and were incorporated in the later collection, being transposed where the original key did not suit the scheme; so that in the second book we cannot profess to trace an advance in maturity, or any very striking difference in style from the first book. One thing may be noticed, however, that while in the first book a good many of the preludes seem to have had an educational purpose and to have been turned into works of art by the addition of some passage which gives them emotional value, those in the second book are, almost without exception, complete poems in themselves.

For many years it was supposed that no approxi-



mately complete autograph manuscript of the second book was in existence, and statements to this effect were made by various editors, even by so careful a writer as Spitta; although as far back as 1842 Mendelssohn had seen in London the autograph of nearly all the contents of the second book, which was then in the possession of a Mr. Emett, who had bought it at Clementi's sale. In 1896 the manuscript was bequeathed by Miss Eliza Wesley to the British Museum, and since it came there, two of the pairs of pieces originally missing from it have been restored, so that now it is complete, with the exception of three pairs (ii. 4, ii. 5, and ii. 12).

Such a document, it stands to reason, is of the highest value to those who wish to have the pure text of the work; for the autograph must represent the text as Bach composed it, and even if some of the early copies made by his pupils contain readings that are evidently improvements on the first idea—and there are not a few instances of this—yet in many other cases where the other manuscripts have a variety of readings, the evidence for which is evenly balanced, the testimony of the autograph may turn the scale one way or the other. So far, the accessibility of the autograph has borne little fruit. Mr. Frederick Westlake, in the first edition of Grove's *Dictionary*, and Professor Ebenezer Prout in the *Monthly Musical Record* for March and April 1896, gave a list of many of the points in which the English manuscript differed from Kroll's (B.-G.) edition, and these were taken on trust by Herr A. Dorffel and incorporated in vol. xlv of the B.-G. edition. These variants, however, represent but a very small proportion of the points that should have been recorded. Of course many differences are in regard to tiny details, such as slurs

and other things which many people think trivial; but in the case of a work like the '48', surely no detail, however minute, is to be disregarded, and we must regret that only those variants which had already been noted in the B.-G. edition have been referred to in the two admirable editions lately published in England, Professor Tovey's, fingered by Mr. Harold Samuel and published by the Associated Board of the R.A.M. and the R.C.M., and Mr. Harold Brooke's, published by Novello & Co. A very curious thing emerges from the comparison of the manuscript with the edition of Bischoff, although the English autograph had not been made accessible when he wrote. In many cases he gives a reading for which there was not a great weight of evidence in the copies, and in the great majority of these his conjectures are supported by the autograph.

ii. 1. *In C major (3-part fugue)*

THE first prelude of the second part seems to have undergone a double process of improvement, as it exists in three different forms. The first and shortest, in an autograph (Hauser) and in a transcript by J. P. Kellner, is given in the B.-G. edition, vol. xxxvi, p. 224, where the careful fingering of the autograph is of great interest. It is also given by Bischoff as an appendix to his vol. vi, but he omits the fingering. The second form is considerably longer, but has not the demisemiquavers of the opening bars, and differs in some other details from the third version. The second is in the British Museum autograph, and is printed in extenso in the B.-G. xlv. 243. There is here a most instructive alteration, for bars 15-20 are scratched out and the version we now know substituted. There is no doubt that the alterations were made by Bach himself, and, as in all such cases, it is of the greatest value and interest to trace the process by which the perfection of the piece was attained. For at the outset of the second book we must be struck by the mature gravity of the opening, which nevertheless does not exclude grace. A similar process of revision may be studied in the fugue, which appears as 'fughetta' (B.-G. xxxvi. 224) in common time, so that one of its bars represents two of the later version. Like the prelude, it is fingered; it has also a number of extra ornaments, implying that this was a version meant for the harpsichord. It is also shorter by eight bars (16 of 2-4 time) than the accepted

text. In the British Museum autograph we can watch the transition from one to the other; for at bar 67 of the later version, instead of the semiquavers of the middle part and the syncopation in the upper, there are four simple quavers which in the earliest version are followed by the final chord. Here the ending of the fugue is prolonged mainly according to the course of the later version.

The style of the fugue is oddly different from that of its prelude, for there is a feeling of artless gaiety about it, and there are no wonderful exhibitions of learning. At bar 13 it seems as if the episode set out to be a stretto, but it is only imitation between the two upper parts, while continuous semiquavers go on in the left hand.

## ii. 2. *In C minor (4-part fugue)*

At first sight the regular figure of the prelude suggests that it is another of those which were meant to help the Bach boys in their technical studies, but it very soon becomes apparent that the interest of the piece is far greater and its purpose far higher. Like some part of a suite, it is two sections, each marked to be repeated; and as in the suites, the first part lands us in the relative major of the key, and the second, by a rather longer way, back to the original C minor. In the British Museum autograph, and in Kirnberger's MS. (Amalienbibliothek, No. 49), the little trills in bars 2 and 4 of the second section appear over the second semiquaver in each group, instead of the first (a reading unnoticed by those who have reported on the English manuscript), and the change from the usual version certainly adds piquancy to the passage.

The fugue is full of points of interest : first, it is only in three parts until the 19th bar, when the fourth voice is introduced ; next, the answer, which has the orthodox B flat at first, has a B natural when it appears in the bass part in bar 7, and the subject, in bar 8, has a dotted rhythm instead of the regular quavers of the opening. When the bass part gets the subject at bar 11, note the poignancy of the G flat (Neapolitan sixth) in the alto part. At bar 14 there is an enchanting combination, for the subject in the upper part is imitated in the bass by the answer inverted, and between the two the subject is presented in augmentation. From this point up to bar 23, where a full close is reached, we have a wonderful series of strettos. More strettos, at shorter intervals, make up a kind of coda, in the course of which there are two delightful little interjections in the tenor part based on the theme, but with considerable modifications. This fugue is one of those where one is sometimes tempted to grudge the intricacies of the construction as likely to hinder the appreciation of the work as expressive music, and to grudge the emotional value of it as disturbing one's astonishment at the ease with which the themes are manipulated. In this, more than elsewhere, it is imperative to keep both aspects in mind.

### ii. 3. *In C sharp major (3-part fugue)*

The 'Prelude' in C sharp is really a prelude and fughetta, which appears to have been at some time intended to be independent, though the fughetta can hardly have been supposed important enough to appear in its place in the collection, so that a longer fugue was put in after it. The prelude proper consists of

a very beautiful succession of harmonies, which in one version, as given by the 'Bückeburg Bach' (J. C. F. Bach, one of Sebastian's younger sons), exist as plain chords in the key of C, marked 'Arpeggio', the exact figure being left to the player's taste. But in the more important manuscripts the tenor part has a very beautiful melodic suggestion, rather than a melody, which exists in two forms, and both of which are given by Bischoff and in other editions, though Tovey's and Brooke's have only the one identical with Bischoff's main text. The B.-G. gives the other version as the main text, with Bischoff's main text in the margin, and the London autograph supports this, so that the evidence is pretty evenly balanced between the two, and as both are beautiful, the point is perhaps not of great importance. According to Turk's strict rule, the little appoggiatura in the second bar of the fughetta (marked 'Allegro' in the autograph) should be taken as a whole crotchet; but in practice it is perhaps better to accept Bischoff's recommendation to play it as a quaver. The quavers in bar 3 are distinctly marked staccato in the autograph and in the manuscripts which Bischoff used; it is to be regretted that Mr. Brooke has altered this effective phrasing in Novello's edition. Professor Tovey happily insists on its importance.

Like the prelude, the fugue was at first in C; for its original form, see B.-G. xxxvi. 225. It was only nineteen bars long, and the process of development can be followed in a way which with rare completeness lets the student into Bach's methods of working. No more instructive and delightful pastime can be devised than that of comparing the two minutely, and for those who are unfortunate enough to be debarred from reference to the B.-G. edition, a very fair idea of the

early version can be obtained by playing the following bars in succession, with the single change that the bars 9 and 10 of the complete fugue are represented by one bar to join bar 8 to bar 11. Bars 1, 2, 6, 7, 8 (one bar), 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 31, 32, and 33 give the harmonic framework, and the autograph shows that the semiquaver figuration that is so prominent in the ultimate version was only gradually brought into its present shape; for the demisemiquavers which begin at bar 8 were obviously added in, as the groups show stems for four even semiquavers, with the fifth note put in between the third and fourth of each group. In the later part of the fugue, these fillings-up were not completed; but the finished version shows that the figure was altered all through, so as to prepare for the rush of demisemiquavers five bars before the end. In the first version we have the surprising stretto at the very beginning, where the third voice enters with an inversion of the subject; there are all sorts of playful treatments of the theme, and several more strettos. At bar 18 the theme (inverted) is brought in in diminution, though it is not carried far. At bar 25 the inverted theme is answered by the direct theme at the usual distance, and between the two the theme is brought in in augmentation. It is especially desirable that the student who has been keen enough to work through the many interesting points of structure here indicated should play the fugue through for the sake of its musical beauty, and should realize the quiet gaiety it expresses.

ii. 4. *In C sharp minor (3-part fugue)*

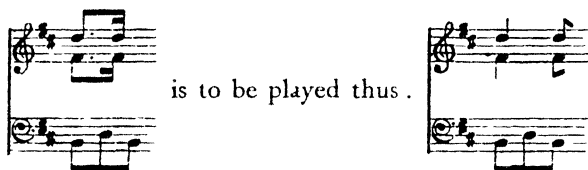
This prelude and fugue, like the next, is missing from the London autograph. The abundance of ornaments in the prelude suggests that the version we know has been thought of for the harpsichord rather than the clavichord, and on the piano there is no doubt that the melodious beauty of the piece will be best brought out if the trills and mordent are left out, and the appoggiaturas interpreted according to Turk's strict rule, and held for the value of two-thirds of the dotted note which they generally precede. Brooke's direction 'quasi solo' is an excellent guide to the way it will be most effective. At the same time due regard must be given to the other parts, for the whole is a masterpiece of free three-part writing.

The mirth of the fugue is in sharp contrast with the gravity of the prelude; the never-ceasing semiquaver triplets are apt to blind us to the fact that it is a work of great elaboration. Exposition and counter-exposition carry us to bar 24, where there is a new exposition of the inverted subject, and a counter-subject built on a quaver followed by a semiquaver. As soon as the three parts have entered, the subject is re-stated (bar 30), and soon (bar 35) there comes in a new counter-subject, a descending passage of a dotted crotchet followed by two dotted quavers. A long episode, in which the first notes of the theme are played with in delightful fashion, leads to another exposition, but with the voices at longer intervals from each other—a kind of reversed stretto—and this to the coda, where the principal materials are worked together.



ii. 5. *In D major (4-part fugue)*

The brilliant prelude in D has much in common with the gigue-form, for it is in two sections, and the second inverts the theme of the first, though it is much longer than most of the similar movements in the suites. After the soul-stirring flourish of the first bar, the pairs of even quavers in the 2nd and 4th bars must be taken very strictly in time, as they only occur in this and the parallel places. In bar 7 begin the groups of a dotted quaver followed by a semiquaver, and here we must remember the convention (about which there is no dispute whatever among the old authorities) that these are to be played exactly as if they were a crotchet followed by a quaver. Thus, in bar 7, the second beat



But there is good reason to suppose that Professor Tovey is right in discrediting uniformity in this matter. In its return to the original key, and in the whole treatment, the prelude is a kind of prophecy of the sonata-form of later days.

It is well that such a fugue as this should be heralded by a flourish of trumpets, for with all its quiet movement, it is a wonder of ingenious structure and virile beauty. The first three notes make themselves prominent at all points, and not less important is the little phrase in the second bar, which, appearing as a counter-subject as soon as the second voice has

entered, is to be heard all through. It appears as a kind of stretto in bar 7, at a distance of two quavers; at bar 27 begins a close stretto in three parts, at the distance of one crotchet, and another at the same distance is at bar 33; at bar 40 the theme is re-stated, and at bar 43 it again appears in the bass with a curious chromatic alteration, preparing us for the *stretto maestrale*, where all four voices are brought in, in a manner which must for ever present a problem to the player. Already in bar 41 he has had to face the difficulty of making the subject clear when the tenor and bass parts cross; but later his powers are more severely taxed, for any phrasing he may have chosen for the presentation of the subject is contradicted by the manifold crossing of the parts. Professor Tovey suggests bringing out the alto and bass parts as against the other two. In the tenor of bar 45, while he preserves the usual reading of a G natural, he adds a G sharp in a marginal note. This is given by Mr. Brooke without alternative, though it is fairly certain that it is an addition in the few manuscripts which have it, put in to satisfy those who dreaded the effect of a false relation with the final quaver of the bar. The counter-subject, exquisitely repeated, brings the fugue to a lovely conclusion.

## ii. 6. *In D minor (3-part fugue)*

We have another chance of seeing Bach in his workshop, for the prelude in D minor is given in the B.-G. edition, xxxvi, p. 226, in its earliest form from an autograph, while the London autograph has it in its ultimate form. In the latter, two bars (37 and 38) were left out when Bach made his fair copy; he put them in afterwards below the rest. The omission of

these two bars also occurs in one of the Berlin autographs, and it is just possible that they may have been an afterthought. For the rest, the early version yields a less valuable lesson than that of the fugue in C sharp (ii. 3). At the passage where the hands are involved with each other, the shape of the figure with rather dull alternations of two notes comes from the early version, but was afterwards modified so that the group at the beginning of each bar stood thus :



as given in the B.-G. edition and by Bischoff, Tovey, and others.. It seems a pity that this reading, which is supported by the London autograph, should not have been adopted by Mr. Brooke; and in several other points, notably the omission of the demisemiquavers in bars 22 and 24, the interest of the figure is lessened by the reading he prefers.

The special charm of the fugue lies in the opposition of the semiquaver sextolets with the regular groups of four and the upward-striving of the former with the sedate, almost despondent, descent of quavers in the second bar of the subject. The counter-subject has the regular semiquavers, and great use is made of them; they appear inverted and are treated in stretto. A more or less free stretto with inversion of the subject comes at bar 10, and others, where both parts are inverted, in bars 17 to 21. Three bars before the end there is yet another incomplete stretto, two parts direct and one inverted.

ii. 7. *In E flat major* (4-part fugue)

The flowing grace of the E flat prelude makes it perhaps the easiest for the unlearned to appreciate at a first hearing, so that it should be one of the most frequented avenues to the great temple of art. The first three notes of the bass part are the germ of the whole, for the theme which occupies most of the attention is based on these, and the resource displayed in the handling of this group of notes, which at first seems rather meagre, being nothing but a slow mordent, must excite our admiration. In the second and fourth bars the first note in the right-hand part has an appoggiatura; it is pointed out by Bischoff that if Turk's rule is strictly observed, so that the E flat lasts for a crotchet, very ugly fourths are heard between this and the bass part; he recommends, therefore, that for once the appoggiatura should not be shortened, but lengthened, so that the grace-note occupies a dotted crotchet, thus:



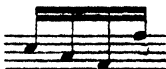
and the same holds good of course in bars 4 and 62. (See Tovey on this point.) Two out of several variants in the London autograph are noted by Westlake and copied by others; the rest of the variants are indeed of minor importance, such as a G for A flat in the middle of the right-hand chord in bar 20. In bar 56 the little semiquaver turn in the bass was smudged in the autograph, and Bach has written the notes 'B, A, G, A', below. It is perhaps only the out-and-out Bach-lover who will feel much interest in this, but to him no little touch of human frailty can seem trivial.

In the fugue there is only one point where the

manuscripts differ, and that is in bar 30, where some of them have a tie between the two B's of the tenor part, and some have two separate notes. The first group take the end of the former phrase to be identical with the fresh start of the subject, the others make the subject start with a shortened note at the half-bar, and this reading is supported by the autograph and by the entry of the bass part at the next bar. This bar with its stretto follows immediately upon the exposition of the four voices, and the other two voices have another stretto soon afterwards. There is a quaver figure unconnected with subject or counter-subject, which plays its part in the latter half of the fugue, and the coda begins with another stretto between the extreme parts. Riemann points out the vocal character of this fugue, and actually suggests words that seem to him appropriate; it is obvious that here, as in many other fugues, the range of each of the parts is kept strictly within the limits of the four principal voices, so that it is possible for good singers who can read well to vocalize them with very lovely effect. Such a study is useful in more ways than one, and must stimulate the love of Bach in every one who takes part in it.

## ii. 8. *In D sharp minor (4-part fugue)*

There are again several points in which the autograph differs from the accepted version of this prelude, but not a single one was noted by the earlier investigators of the manuscript. In bar 9, for example, the second group of semiquavers stands thus, as Bischoff gives it in his main text :



The validity of Turk's rule of the appoggiatura is proved at the end of each of the two sections of the prelude, because the first note of the pair of quavers, usually given as a quaver, is an appoggiatura in the autograph, with the main note as a crotchet, thus showing that the two ways of writing amounted to the same thing. With Bach's characteristic mastery, he makes the two parts of the prelude sound so rich that we can hardly believe the texture to be really so slight as it is.

It would take too long to give all the various readings of the fugue, and to point out the places where the autograph supports one or other; they are given with a fair amount of completeness by Bischoff and the B.-G. edition, and in their selection, Professor Tovey and Mr. Brooke, in full agreement, have been guided by musical considerations. The fugue is one of the saddest in the book, for the subject is one of the most deeply expressive in music. Little hopeful groups of three notes rising gradually form the counter-subject, but seem unable to assuage the sorrow of the theme. An important semiquaver figure comes in with the entry of the bass part, and the counter-exposition has only three entries, for before the fourth the alto part has anticipated it, to form a curious stretto at the interval of a ninth and the distance of one bar. At bar 32 the theme is re-stated, but with a whole tone instead of the semitone of the original; it reappears in the first form, towards the end, and is accompanied by chords in the three upper parts, which lead, at bar 43, to the simultaneous statement of the subject in the soprano and tenor parts, the latter being the inversion of the former.

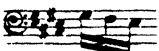
ii. 9. *In E major (4-part fugue)*

The lovely prelude, with its three winding parts and its frequent use of 'pedal' points, is among the most poetical things in the work, and is a most fitting introduction to the glorious fugue, which, if a plébiscite of educated musicians were taken, would probably stand first of all in their affections. One point of textual criticism is all we need notice: the group of three semiquavers in the left-hand part of bar 50 seems to have undergone a good deal of revision, for

while the accepted text has , one set of

the copies reads  and another 

One of the most authoritative manuscripts reads

, and this has also the authority of the

London autograph, so that we may be pretty sure that this, which is followed by Professor Tovey, represents the ultimate reading; for in the London autograph there are evident signs that one of the other readings was given, but the group of notes last quoted is clearly written above the erasure.

Well did Samuel Wesley call the ninth fugue 'The Saints in Glory' (*Bach Letters*); and by a curious coincidence, a theme almost identical with this subject was used by Brahms for the opening of the *Schicksalshied*, where, with a slight rhythmic difference, the same series of notes gives us the picture of the blissful state of the celestial citizens. It is as if the same window of heaven had been opened to the view of the two great masters. The exposition of the noble

subject, and its attendant counter-subject with the moving crotchets, is over by the ninth bar, and a close stretto begins in all four parts; a short episode leads to a new stretto at the distance of a bar, instead of the bar and a half of the opening. This, with another episode, brings us to bar 26, where, as the key modulates to C sharp minor, our ears are refreshed by a melody that we hardly recognize at first; but it is the subject in diminution, which is promptly imitated in the other parts; when the bass has it, the subject comes in not diminished, and the soprano part, with a drop of a fifth, enters with the inverted form of the diminished subject. Even this is not all, for at bar 35 a close stretto of the three lower parts is accompanied by the soprano part in the diminished and inverted form of the subject, but with a change into the counter-subject as it soars upward. The subject appears once more in a majestic march of the bass part for the close of the sublime work

ii. 10. *In E minor (3-part fugue)*

The prelude is remarkable for the ingenuity of its imitations and for the skill with which the little theme is developed so as to modulate whither the composer wishes. Like so many of the preludes in the second book, it is in two sections, each repeated. These show the orthodox modulations and returns to the original key. The shakes in bar 29 and parallel places are of course intended to go on for four bars each time. In bars 57, 58, and 59, the London autograph puts a turn over the middle note of each group of three quavers. Tovey inserts the first and third as against the B.-G., &c., but omits the second.



The fugue has the longest subject of any of the '48', so that there is less opportunity than usual for the interesting devices of the fugue-form. There are five episodes, the first of which begins immediately after the exposition ends at bar 18; all the episodes are built on materials from the subject, for the counter-subject with its long notes serves mainly to keep things together. The coda, which begins after the fugue has as it were drawn up at a pause, is of great beauty and effect; but still the fugue is not one of the most attractive in the collection, although it is held to be a model of the form, so that Prout presents it in open score for the student's study (Fugue, p. 141).

ii. 11. *In F major (3-part fugue)*

The prelude in F major is remarkable for its economy of material, the whole being built on a conventional turn; the flowing quavers carry us along in a smooth, full stream of polyphony, and the device, so often used in the English suites and elsewhere, of constructing a chord by means of holding down the successive harmonic notes in an arpeggio or the like, is here especially prominent, and it gives a peculiar richness to the fabric.

The gentle gaiety of the fugue almost defies analysis, for after the exposition, and an additional entry of the bass voice, it proceeds on its way with scarcely any regard to the usual fugal devices. Bits of the theme or the counter-subject are constantly thrown about from one part to another, and there are two pedal points; the last entry of the bass is interesting, for at bar 89, instead of the subject in its first form, with the opening group of notes repeated, two notes higher, the bass part has four repetitions of the group,

rising by one note at a time. It is perhaps worth pointing out that the readings of the B.-G. edition and of Bischoff, which are closely followed by Professor Tovey and Mr. Brooke, are supported by the autograph in the case of the F naturals in bars 74 and 75; while the same authority exists for the low D (B.-G., Tovey, and Brooke) in the bass of bar 83, where Bischoff leaves a blank.

ii. 12. *In F minor (3-part fugue)*

The eloquent expression of the prelude is in nowise lessened by its rather formal design, and there is something curiously satisfying about the alternation of the first and second group of four-bar periods. Like so many preludes of the second book, it is in two parts, each to be repeated. This conventional 'repeat' suggests that such preludes were designed for the harpsichord rather than the clavichord, and the suggestion is supported by the presence in some manuscripts, though not in all, of a mordent on the second note of the fugue. As it is hardly possible to repeat this ornament whenever the subject appears, it is perhaps better on the piano, as on the clavichord, to leave it out. In bar 50, Professor Tovey's reading of the left-hand part is to be preferred to that of Mr. Brooke; both are well authenticated, but the former is not only the less smooth (and for that reason the more likely to be right), but it agrees with the rest of the sequence. It is unfortunate that the British Museum autograph lacks this prelude and fugue.

The fugue has a character which could be interpreted in two ways: it could be taken as a sprightly movement with some suggestion of a polka-rhythm, or as a contemplative piece, at a slower tempo, when

the smooth semiquaver passages of the latter part of the subject would seem more important than the staccato notes of the first portion. We might almost take the meditative prelude as a warning against the more frivolous interpretation, and certainly a serious mood suits the latter half of the fugue admirably. From bar 55 onwards the bass part seems to make vain efforts to recall the subject.

ii. 13. *In F sharp major (3-part fugue)*

The Prelude in F sharp is as remarkable for grace as for economy of material. The little descending passage of the opening appears in most of the editions in a rather ambiguous form; but in Novello's it is presented as all commentators have directed it to be played, even when they have retained the notation of the original. The dotted rhythm of the bass, and a figure of regular semiquavers make up the thematic substance of the piece, which is a wonderful example of the richness of effect that Bach could attain with only two parts. There are various slight differences of reading in the British Museum autograph, which gives most, though not the first, of the 'Vorschläge' that are in Bischoff's edition. If they are played, Turk's rule must be strictly obeyed, and the grace-note given the value of a whole crotchet in the first bar, and of a whole quaver in later cases.

The prelude, as we have seen, gets much of its charm from the interweaving of three phrases, and the fugue has a similar threefold design; the two halves of the subject are treated as more or less contrasting factors, and the counter-subject is combined with them in every possible arrangement. The

## ii. 13. *In F sharp major* 23

regular fugal pattern is not broken; but there are none of the special devices, and it can be enjoyed without reference to its technical structure, as a piece of very great eloquence and meaning. The E at the end of the soprano part in bar 46 is marked as natural in the British Museum MS., and is followed in Novello's edition, though not by Professor Tovey.

## ii. 14. *In F sharp minor (3-part fugue)*

The beautiful prelude in F sharp minor is a striking example of the way in which the readings of the autograph have been treated by various editors. The list in Grove leaves out of account two of the most important variants; first, that in bar 7, the first group of notes in both hands contains semiquaver triplets, not one semiquaver followed by two demisemiquavers. In the next bar the autograph has the demisemiquavers given by Tovey, as against the usual reading. In that same bar 8, the last note of the tenor part is B descending to A at the beginning of bar 9. Although Bischoff made his edition before the London autograph was accessible, or even the small proportion of its readings registered in the B.-G. edition, he chose here, as in so many other cases, the reading that the London MS. supports. It is curious that Mr. Brooke in very many cases has set aside the readings of the autograph; while he follows it in bar 7, he rejects those in bar 8; in bar 14 he has not given the lowest note in the right-hand part as D sharp with the autograph, but as D natural, with the less authoritative manuscripts. In bar 18 the reading, which is one of the two reported in Grove, is set aside; but in this



## ii. 14. *In F sharp minor* 25

general plan it is not unlike the five-part fugue in C sharp minor (i. 4), for after the regular exposition and some episodic matter built on the first three notes direct or inverted, we have a close in A major, and the introduction of a new subject of four descending notes, which are treated in stretto at once; the two are combined in several ways, and lead to a close in C sharp minor, where a third subject creeps in in semiquavers (bar 36-37); like the second subject, this is treated in stretto, and from this point to the end of the long fugue, we have the three subjects presented in an astounding variety of ways. Until the authorities are agreed on the proper title for such fugues as these two (some call them 'fugues with two counter-subjects'; others, 'triple fugues'), we must rest content to enjoy them as creations of the greatest beauty which happen to be built on very intricate plans.

## ii. 15. *In G major (3-part fugue)*

The British Museum is the fortunate possessor of two autographs of this prelude and fugue; the second (Add. MS. 38068) is a single page bound up with the autograph of the bulk of the second book (Add. MS. 35021). In an interesting article on various points in the '48', in the *Musical Times* for December 1923 and January 1924, the writer contends for the introduction of a C sharp into the seventh bar of this prelude; but none of the usual editions give it, and both the London autographs and the best manuscripts in Germany support its omission. The prelude is in two (repeated) sections, the first leading into the dominant key and the second returning to the tonic, according to the usual plan. The swaying movement

above the pedal note at the opening is most attractive ; and though the look of the passages on paper suggests that, like so many of the preludes in the first book, it served as a study, yet none of the preludes has a more engaging demeanour. There exist two other preludes in the same key, designed, no doubt at different times, to precede the 'fughetta' which is a kind of sketch for the one we now have. One of these two preludes (B.-G. xxxvi) expresses the same suave mood as the piece just discussed ; it also begins with a pedal, and has the gentle motion in sixths. The other is a good deal less interesting ; both, together with the 'fughetta', are given in Bischoff's edition as an appendix to the second book ; in Peters, 4518 ; and in the B.-G. edition, xxxvi.

The development of the fugue we know from the 'fughetta' is most interesting as an illustration of Bach's power of self-criticism ; the counter-subject in the sketch is composed of repeated quavers that are of very little interest, and they are replaced by the beautiful figuration from bar 17 onwards. The bass is hardly changed from what we know until bar 41, when the upper part alone is retained ; bars 53-65 are entirely new, and the passage contains, like so many of the preludes in the first book, a cadenza-like scale that leads back to a fresh statement of the first subject which is almost identical with the form it had in the sketch. The appoggiatura on the last note should be taken as a full crotchet. Each of the alternative readings of bar 60 given by Tovey is supported by one of the two London MSS.

ii. 16. *In G minor (4-part fugue)*

In this prelude there is an interesting little detail which shows that the London autograph was the source from which the group of manuscripts known as the 'Altnikol Group' was copied. In bar 16 the minim G in the alto part is given in the 'Altnikol' MSS. as two crotchets, whether tied together or independent; and the autograph shows that Bach had reached the end of a line on the first beat of the bar, and had to begin a fresh line with the second beat; this involved putting a crotchet at the end of the one line, and another tied to it at the beginning of the other; the two being obviously the equivalent of a single minim. So the two crotchets were retained with punctilious accuracy by the copyist, and the tie was removed by some one who did not understand why two crotchets were written where one minim would have sufficed. The point is a very small one, but undoubtedly increases the authority of the autograph. At bar 9 there is a variant of some importance in the left-hand part, and neither reading seems of paramount authority or musical value. The B.-G. and Bischoff give this as the main text:



following the London MS. and an autograph in Berlin; in the margin they add this:



from some manuscripts of the 'Altnikol' group.



It is this reading that is preferred by Tovey and Brooke. The Peters edition has



Apart from such hair-splitting, the prelude suggests some majestic tragedy that 'in sceptred pall comes sweeping by', for the rhythm with its dotted semiquavers suggests the pompous style of the French overtures of Bach's time, and its stateliness is not without a touch of artificiality.

There is only one important point of textual criticism in the fugue, although many of the tied notes are given as repeated notes in some manuscripts and as tied in others. In bar 77, last beat, the group of four semiquavers in the alto part is preceded in some manuscripts by a flat, rejected by most of the editors; but it appears quite distinctly in the London autograph, though its presence was ignored by the writer in Grove's *Dictionary* as well as in the Tovey and Brooke editions.

The tragic character of the prelude is carried out in the fugue, which begins with a subject that must remind most people of the 'Es muss sein' of Beethoven, and will perhaps suggest to others the knocking at the door in *Macbeth*. The seven reiterated notes of the fourth bar play a very prominent part throughout, and so does the main counter-subject. After the extended counter-exposition we find the theme entering in two parts at once, in thirds, and presently in sixths; at bar 59 the counter-subject is combined with it in the same way, so that two sets of thirds are going on simultaneously. At bar 75 the counter-subject is treated in stretto, and in a final

statement of the subject the three rising notes of the counter-subject are used to introduce the emphatic crotchets of the opening. In the last bar but one, the rise of three notes up to the E flat is duly written out in the B.-G., Bischoff, and Tovey editions as well as in the autograph; it is a pity that in the Novello edition it is replaced by a sign of which the meaning is not generally known in the present day.

ii. 17. *In A flat (4-part fugue)*

The lovely and appealing prelude derives all its thematic material from the first two bars, and is a striking instance of Bach's economy in the use of themes, for the interest of the piece is kept up through its 77 bars. There are a good many differences of reading among the manuscripts, but the most important is one of which some part was included in the article in Grove. In the London autograph, bars 53-59 stand thus (right-hand part only):



It is of course not a matter of one reading being right and the other wrong, for there is no doubt that Bach wrote both, and though it is hard to say which of the two represents his ultimate choice, we must recognize the 'infinite capacity for taking pains' which was Bach's throughout his life. The editors are probably right in preferring the usual text of the passage.

The fugue with its most attractive theme runs a fairly simple course, with few or none of the devices that are so common elsewhere. Bach must have been in love with the theme, for he allows it to enter no less than fifteen times, and the last entry, 3 bars before the end, is in a middle part, and five voices are for a short time employed. At bar 13 there is a very interesting departure from convention; the stately descent of crotchets which forms the main counter-subject is usually transposed when it accompanies the subject, as in bar 6; but at the later point the subject enters in the bass with the crotchets of the counter-subject untransposed.

## ii. 18. *In G sharp minor (3-part fugue)*

The prelude is one of those which bear traces of being intended for the harpsichord, since the words 'piano' and 'forte' occur in the autographs at bars 3 and 5 respectively, indicating a change of keyboard at these points, and certainly implying a similar change at corresponding places. It is in two sections (repeated), like so many in the second book, with the usual modulation to the dominant and back. It would take too long to discuss the very numerous differences of reading, for which the student must be referred to Bischoff's and Tovey's editions.

## ii. 18. *In G sharp minor* 31

The same restful, plaintive mood as that of the prelude prevails in the fugue, which, taken as pure music, is one of the most expressive lullabies in the world. It is a double fugue, using that term in the sense in which two of the other fugues in the collection (i. 4 and ii. 14) are triple fugues, i.e. that it is built on two subjects, as they on three; each subject has its own exposition completed before the entry of the next, and they are only combined after each has been thus introduced. There is no example in the '48 of the stricter form to which the names are usually given, where the subjects enter simultaneously. The second subject enters at bar 61, and the two are combined from bar 97 onwards.

## ii. 19. *In A major (3-part fugue)*

The prelude shows how fugal writing had become a second nature to Bach; like many of the gígues in the suites, it begins as if it were an accompanied fugue, and even the rule about tonal answers is obeyed, for the upper voice has a rising fourth to begin with, and the second a rising fifth; these two parts twine about each other, and soon lure the bass part to join in their gracious dance. At bar 9 there is a charming inversion carried through all three parts, and from bar 19 the theme is played with both in direct and inverted form.

The fugue continues and develops the idea of interwoven ornament, and the latter part of the theme is so like a regular inversion of the earlier part that it serves the aesthetic purpose of a real inversion;

is used for episodes and almost draws attention away from some of the entries, which moreover are disguised by having one or two notes put immediately

before them. See the bass entry at bar 16, and the soprano entry at bar 20. In bar 21 the London autograph has an interesting variant, for the second G in the soprano part has evidently had a natural before it; but as evidently the natural has been crossed out, so that G sharp (in the key) is implied. Thus Bischoff's and Tovey's reading is supported as against that of Mr. Brooke. In another place, too, the last bar but one, the autograph supports the same pair of editors, for the third group in the right-hand part has a D sharp at the end of it, which the Novello edition omits. The two cases are exactly similar, and the variants can be seen in the B.-G. edition, xiv. 265.

## ii. 20. *In A minor (3-part fugue)*

The prelude in A minor is perhaps the most striking of the many instances in which Bach has taken the chromatic scale for his theme. With him it nearly always carries a suggestion of tears, as it confessedly does in the 'Capriccio on the Departure of a Brother' (see on i. 14). The inexorable succession of falling quavers and the florid figure that is so eloquent of grief, are handled with infinite skill; the two always appear together, now one and now the other being at the top. The two-section pattern and the orthodox opening of the second section with an inversion of the theme are adopted, and the character is changed, as hope seems about to dawn in the rising passages.

The fugue takes arms against a sea of troubles, and formerly held out a promise of ultimate victory in the 'tierce de Picardie' which appears in the London autograph, though not in the accepted texts. These, no doubt, represent Bach's ultimate decision. The first four notes of the theme were regarded as common

property in the eighteenth century. (Compare 'And with His stripes' in *The Messiah* and many other fugues of the time.) But it soon strikes out a line for itself; for the second group of notes is a repetition of the first, one note lower, and in quavers instead of crotchets. The counter-subject with its rapid demi-semiquavers gives strong individuality to the fugue, which is one of the most vigorous in the collection. The quavers of the theme are treated in stretto in bars 10-12 and again in bars 22-24. In bar 6 Mr. Brooke prefers the reading of the pupils' manuscripts to that of the autograph, and in bar 17 both he and Professor Tovey follow the pupils rather than the master.

ii. 21. *In B flat major (3-part fugue)*

The suave prelude is built on a descending scale which enters in a three-part imitation at the octave, and is soon inverted; at bar 8 there is a new subject starting with an arpeggio figure, treated in close imitation. This is the material of the piece, which is in two repeated sections. It is, as Riemann points out, in a kind of sonata form, for after development in section 2 the main theme is resumed (bar 49), and here there is a detail on which the reading of the London autograph has an important bearing. At the third repetition of the scale in bar 2 the A is altered to A flat, giving a Mixolydian touch; this is increased at the *réprise* in bar 49, for the second occurrence of the scale has it as well as the third (though Mr. Brooke has omitted it), and the trend of the whole passage is towards the keys of C minor and F minor. In bar 63 the third G in the alto part, and the D in the top and bottom parts, are all marked as flats in

the autograph. Mr. Brooke leaves all these as naturals, but Bischoff has conjectured the flats in the bar last named with his usual insight. The prelude draws up at a pause in bar 76, and a delightful coda is formed by the scale passage played simultaneously in two parts in the direct against the inverted form.

The readings of the autograph in the prelude are certainly as interesting as the accepted version, but the text of the fugue suggests that it represents an earlier state of the piece than the one we know. It is true that the even crotchets which appear as a counter-subject in bars 5-6 (B.-G. and Bischoff's margin, Tovey's main text) account for some of the later uses of this figure more clearly than is done by the substituted continuation of the quaver movement; in bar 78 it is pretty clear that our autograph was the source from which many copies were taken, for the last note in the right-hand part varies in the manuscripts between B and C, and in the London autograph there stands a large note which might easily be taken for either the one or the other. It is obvious that the B (B.-G. text, Bischoff's margin) represents the original shape of the answer more closely than does the C (B.-G. margin, Bischoff's text); the latter is preferred by Tovey and Brooke, who may have been misled by Prout's account of the autograph. The little slurs which appear over the pairs of quavers in bars 3 and 4, and are in the manuscripts, should be observed throughout the fugue at the parallel points.

ii. 22. *In B flat minor (4-part fugue)*

The glorious intricacy of the prelude springs from a very simple germ, as if Bach wanted to show what he could do with two adjacent notes of the scale. If we compare the third, fourth, and fifth notes of the opening theme, the bass in bar 2, and the middle part in bar 4, we shall find in all three the notes B flat, A and B flat. The first has them in the course of a flowing passage, and the last employs them to emphasize a forceful reiteration of three notes which provide a fine element of contrast.

The subject of the wonderful fugue is evidently derived from the same germ, for the whole theme might be subdivided into pairs of rising notes based on a single degree of the scale. A good many small variants in the London autograph were overlooked by those who made the cursory examination of the manuscript in the 'seventies', so that they are not referred to in either of the new English editions. The subject is diatonic, the counter-subject chromatic. Four bars after the exposition is finished (at bar 27) there is a stretto first between alto and tenor, and afterwards between soprano and bass. At bar 42 begins the treatment not only of the theme, but of all the contrapuntal material, in inversion; and again, soon after the exposition is complete, a stretto appears like that in bar 27, but inverted, first between tenor and soprano, and then between alto and bass. At bar 89 there is a yet more extraordinary stretto, between the bass and the alto parts, the former direct and the latter inverted. (This last entry is rather difficult to make clear on the piano; it would be impossible on the harpsichord, and the whole of this



prelude and fugue cry out for the clavichord as the proper medium.) At bar 96 the two upper parts enter together in sixths, and at a minim's distance the tenor and bass enter together with the inverted theme in thirds, and bring the fugue to a triumphant close. The word 'triumphant' will only be justified in the ears of the listener who is awake to the beauty of elaborate counterpoint; the hearer who is looking for emotions will find the fugue expressive of a sorrow bravely faced and realized as bringing strength to the character of the mourner.

## ii. 23. *In B major (4-part fugue)*

The prelude has such a variety of movement that one wonders what would have become of the material in the hands of some lesser composer; and those who have ploughed the weary wastes of C. P. E. Bach's solo sonatas will realize what is meant by the dullness begotten of perpetual change. But Sebastian Bach, as we might expect, knows how to weave together diverse strands into a connected whole; and the piece does not suggest any want of homogeneity, although the first two bars have one kind of figure and the next six bars another, while from bar 17 to bar 23 there are passages in which only a single part is employed. In bar 45 (last bar but one) the London autograph supports the reading of the B.-G. edition, Bischoff, and Tovey, not that of Mr. Brooke, which comes from the 'Altnikol' group of manuscripts.

The splendid fugue has the regular exposition with an additional entry of the bass voice, and after a dominant close a new subject in quavers is started in the soprano voice; this is not treated separately with its own exposition, like two others of this book

(4 and 14), but is at once combined with the solemn minims of the first theme. At bar 35, after three of the parts have entered with the new theme, there is one of those touches of humour that are more common in the first book than in the second, where Bach deceives us with what appears to be an entry in the tenor voice, just before the real entry of the bass comes in. There is a kind of coda beginning at bar 75 which sums up the whole fugue and breathes peace after the strife of the two contrasting themes, in the course of which the original counter-subject ran some danger of being squeezed out. One bit of textual criticism: at bar 70 a double-sharp has been prefixed to the C (second note in the alto part) in Novello's edition, which, though unsupported by the weight of manuscript authority, exactly corresponds with the sequence two bars earlier.

ii. 24. *In B minor (3-part fugue)*

In both the modern English editions of this prelude the editors have followed a single copy made by Altnikol, and have halved the value of the notes as they appear in the usual text and in the London autograph. There the word 'Allegro' has been prefixed to the piece by Bach, and the 'Andantino' of the transformed version results in a pace very much the same to the ear, but conveying to the player rather a different idea of the character of the prelude. In most other details of the piece the autograph has been faithfully followed, but the little group of notes that lead to the pause in bar 29 (bar 57 of the original) is—according to the autograph—



as Tovey's margin. On the whole, the pensive expression of the prelude is perhaps more likely to be realized in the version with the altered values, and the latest editors are thereby justified.

If Bach could be supposed to have intended the forty-eighth of his fugues as the crown and climax of a masterpiece, we should be obliged to confess that its jaunty character comes short of fulfilment of such an intention; but it would probably be equally apt and equally untrue to suggest that he expresses in this fugue his pleasure at having completed his task, and at getting back to his favourite key of B minor. The octaves in the third and fourth bars of the subject give to the whole a saltatory character, and a second counter-subject which enters at bar 29 has wide stretches which, taken together with those of the subject, make the fugue by no means easy to interpret even on the piano or clavichord, while on the harpsichord it could hardly be intelligible at all. There are various little strettos, as at bars 15-17, 26-28, and 69-71; but for the rest, the attention is taken up mainly by the latter part of the subject and a beautiful episode which begins chromatically at bar 50. The opening notes of the theme take their revenge at the very end, where they bring the fugue to a close without reference to their usurping continuation. It is to be regretted that Mr. Brooke has left out the appoggiaturas at bars 46 and 100, as well as the major close, which last appears in the autograph, though without the appoggiatura.

















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